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ADDRESS

BY

SENATOR HENRY W. HILL

In accepting the Bronze Bust
"La France," by the Sculptor
Rodin, the gift of the people
of France to the New York and
Vermont Lake Champlain Ter-
centenary Commissions at the
Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New
York City, on May 1, 1912

Ambassador Jusserand, Monsieur Gabriel Hanotaux, and
other Members of the Delegation from France, and
Gentlemen of the New York and Vermont Tercen-
tenary Commissions, and of the New York Cham-
plain Association:

This is a fitting postlude to the Bi-State programme of
International Tercentenary exercises in commemoration of
the discovery of one of the most charming lakes in America
by the brave and highminded Samuel Champlain, who first
proclaimed Christianity among the aborigines of that Valley
in the declaration that "the salvation of one soul is of more
value than the conquest of an enemy." The light of civili-
zation thus first gleaming through the darkness of savagery
is to be symbolized in a memorial lighthouse erected by the
States of New York and Vermont on property of the United

States Government at Crown Point Forts, that location being for 150 years one of the strategic points of the French possessions in America, and the life work of the discoverer is to be further perpetuated by an heroic size statue by the New York sculptor, Charles Augustus Heber, at Plattsburgh. The people of the two States in grateful appreciation of the life, services and high moral character of the discoverer of the lake which bears his name, and who was the first white man to set foot on the soil of New York and Vermont, eleven years before the Pilgrims entered Plymouth Bay, and two months before Henry Hudson discovered the river bearing his name, flowing into this beautiful harbor of New York, conceived and carried forward the Champlain Tercentenary Celebration of 1909, which has awakened deep interest in the principles and common purposes of two Republics, and done much to strengthen the friendship between them, that prompted France to shed across the seas its kindly and beneficent influence upon this Republic in its infancy. In the conduct of that Tercentenary now considered as one of the most noted American commemorative celebrations, the Republic of France represented by its gifted and eloquent patriot and scholar, Ambassador Jusserand, the Kingdom of Great Britain by its distinguished Ambassador Right Honorable James Bryce, the Dominion of Canada by its noted Postmaster General Lemieux, the Province of Quebec by its gifted Premier Sir Lomer Gouin, the Empire of Japan by its Vice-Admiral, Uriu, and the United States by its President and Secretary of War, and some members of its Senate and House of Representatives, and representatives of the Army and Navy, participated with the States of New York and Vermont, and thus gave it an International character, worthy the important events which it was designed to commemorate.

You would be likely to form a more adequate conception of the magnitude of the Tercentenary Celebration, if you were to picture the Champlain Valley, one hundred miles in length, and twenty-five miles in width, with the lake, as

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stated by Dr. Cady, "a prisms pendant dropped from out the skies," interspersed with beautiful islands, and buttressed by prominent headlands, as an arena with over-towering mountains on either side, forming a background of superb natural beauty and suggesting ideals of the true and sublime in nature and a sky of Italian beauty vaulting a lake of crystal waters, where five great scenes were presented to thronging thousands of interested spectators—one at Crown Point which projects into the lake so far as nearly to sever it into two sections, where was erected at vast expenditure of money, in 1731, by the French, Fort Frédéric, in honor of the French Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Frédéric Maurepas, under the supervision of the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor-General of Canada, and later by the British under Lord Amherst, the fort now forming a grand ruin; another scene twenty miles distant, on the following day, at Ticonderoga, "the gateway of the Nation," where was built Fort Carillon, in 1755, around which struggled the flower of contending armies of three sovereign nations for its control; another scene, sixty miles distant, at Plattsburgh Barracks, on a plateau overlooking Valcour Island, where occurred one of the chief naval engagements of the Revolution, the report of which electrified the Continental Congress, and also overlooking Plattsburgh Bay, where occurred the decisive naval engagement of the War of 1812, in which the American Fleet under Macdonough defeated and routed the British Fleet under Downie, and still another scene twenty-five miles distant, on the following day, in the City of Burlington, under the shadow of the University which had been burned during the War of 1812, and whose corner-stone was re-laid by Marquis de Lafayette in 1825, and where stands a statue erected to his memory, on a sloping hillside overlooking Burlington Bay, that beautiful Baiae of our inland sea, and the clear waters of the historic lake walled in on the west by the rugged and occasionally snow-capped peaks of the Adirondacks, and the fifth scene, forty-five miles distant, on the following day, at beautiful Isle La Motte,

which was the first land in the Champlain Valley visited by Samuel Champlain, which had been for two centuries or more the common meeting place of warring Indian tribes, and which became the rendezvous of missionaries, and where in 1666, was built Fort Ste. Anne, and where High Mass was first celebrated in the State of Vermont, and where was stationed the Carignan-Salières Regiment of 600 French veterans. At each of these scenes were Indian pageants, moved from place to place on a floating island, participated in by 150 descendants of the native aboriginal tribes that occupied the Champlain Valley, and enlivened by military and naval forces, with formal addresses, speeches and poems, by the President of the United States and the distinguished diplomats, orators and poets in attendance, presenting anew the story and thrilling events that have transpired in the Champlain Valley since its discovery three centuries ago. This will afford some conception of the great drama of the Champlain Tercentenary Celebration, in which Samuel Champlain, the navigator, colonizer and apostle of civilization in that valley, *Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, was the hero and central figure.

On this occasion we are profoundly touched at the generosity and friendship of President Fallières and the French people, exhibited in the presentation by the distinguished delegation who have come from France, of this allegorical bust "La France," by Auguste Rodin, and we gratefully accept the same in the name of the New York and Vermont Lake Champlain Tercentenary Commissions, in behalf of the people of the two States, as well as of the people of the United States, and through you, Monsieur Hanotaux, and other members of your delegation from France, we tender to President Fallières and the people of France, who have so generously contributed to the purchase and presentation of this beautiful bust, our grateful appreciation and acknowledgments.

This work of art, coming as a voluntary expression of the good will and cordial feelings of the French people for

Americans who have shown some appreciation of the discoveries and services for humanity of one of the most noted French explorers among many, who were first to open up the interior of this continent to the onward march of civilization, is an imperishable testimonial of that abiding friendship existing between the peoples of the two foremost Republics in the world, which have done so much for the liberty, equality and fraternity of mankind. When we reflect upon the evolution of French institutions from Charlemagne to Fallières, the progress of the French people in the arts and sciences within the last century, and the contributions that they have made to these, and to literature and to art, as well as to the world's diplomacy and intellectual development, we do not wonder that the Republic across the sea, which you represent, gentlemen, is aglow with vitality and energized by new and expanding ideas, and is forging forward as one of the most progressive and powerful nations in the world. Had not the French people been open to new ideas, possibly they would not have responded to the appeals of Franklin and our other patriots during the Revolution, and the Marquis de Lafayette, Comte de Rochambeau, with his 6,000 soldiers, Comte de Grasse, with his fleet, and others, would not have crossed the Atlantic to aid the Colonies in their struggle for independence.

Lafayette and others carried back with them something of the inspiration which they had derived from their experience in this country and from their contact with General Washington and other patriots, and their reports did something to arouse the National Assembly of France, and the princes and potentates of European nations to a realization of the evidences of the Republican movement in America as well as in Europe, which culminated in making most of the nations of western Europe more democratic and responsive to popular liberties. On the establishment of a Republican form of government in France in 1848, the President of the United States

transmitted a message to Congress, in which he said: "We can never forget that France was our early friend in our eventful Revolution, and generously aided us in shaking off a foreign yoke and becoming a free and independent people. We have enjoyed the blessing of our system of well regulated self-government for nearly three-fourths of a century, and can properly appreciate its value. Our ardent and sincere congratulations are extended to the patriotic people of France upon their noble and thus far successful efforts to found for their future government liberal institutions similar to our own. It is not doubtful that under the benign influence of free institutions the enlightened statesmen of Republican France will find it to be for her true interests and permanent glory to cultivate with the United States the most liberal principles of international intercourse and commercial reciprocity, whereby the happiness and prosperity of both nations will be promoted." A fitting response to this was made by the National Assembly of France, and there have from that time forth existed cordial relations between the two sister Republics. These relations were emphasized in the presentation by the French people of the colossal statue "Liberty Enlightening the World," by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, and unveiled with elaborate ceremonies on Bedloe's Island in New York harbor, on October 28, 1886. When the Rodin allegorical bust "La France" is in its permanent home by the Champlain Memorial Light at the Crown Point Forts near the head of Lake Champlain, it will be on the highway of travel by water between New York harbor and Lake Champlain, through the enlarged and improved Champlain Canal nearing completion, and so be brought into communication with the Statue of Liberty, and will do something to restore the interest of travelers as well as of our French-American citizens, in the history of that region, for 150 years under control of the French Nation, and within a few miles of which at Ticonderoga, Montcalm and others achieved imperishable fame, and will be a further lasting expression of the artistic temperament and proverbial generosity of

the French people toward the people of this Nation, the genius of whose institutions has been more or less reflected in the evolution of French institutions during the last century. As an expression of one of your most renowned sculptors, it will awaken a deeper interest of the people in that valley in art, which has been ideally expressed in this allegorical bust "La France," in a way to symbolize the marvelous genius of the French people.

The members of New York and Vermont Lake Champlain Tercentenary Commissions bid you, gentlemen, of the French delegation, a most cordial welcome to our shores, and tender to you their deep appreciation of the gift which you bring from your people.

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